

I would like to please ask that the FCC to declare invalid, the non-compete agreements that Sorenson Communications, Inc., imposed on its video relay service interpreters. The agreements currently prohibit the interpreters from working for one year in any capacity for a competing VRS provider, or entity contracting with a competing VRS provider. After all, Sorenson does not teach any of their interpreters sign language, this is something each person learned on their own, funded with their own time, talents and money.

I strongly believe this anti-competitive practice by Sorenson hurts those members of the deaf community who rely on quality interpretive services. Sorenson's non-compete practice restricts interpreters who may have only worked one day for them from working for us or any other VRS provider - even if they were terminated or wish to work for another provider in non VRS settings. The restriction applies at least on a state-wide basis so an interpreter who worked for Sorenson in El Paso, Texas would be prohibited from working for AT&T in Houston, Texas, some 750 miles away.

Who's decision is it to hamper anyone's ability to work, in their chosen field of work? In my opinion, it's just plain immoral to deny anyone to provide for themselves, or their families.

The deaf have a difficult time as it is communicating with the 'hearing' world around them. Why make their resources for getting help with their communications, they rely on interpreting to function in society.

By allowing Sorenson, or any other company to enforce such an agreement which is causing interpreters (or any employee of Sorenson, past or present) to go to great pains to transfer to one company to another and is at the same time, stifling competition in the marketplace. Competition spurs innovation, better services and encourages companies to treat their employees fairly - knowing full-well, that their employees are valuable assets to the company and should be treated fairly and with compassion—not as slave labor.

I strongly believe that the FCC should take immediate action for three simple reasons:

1. To protect the right of interpreters to work anywhere they want for anybody who will hire them.
2. To protect the deaf community by ensuring that this scarce resource is managed wisely; and

3. To promote a competitive VRS industry which will provide customers with the best possible service.

Thank you,

Dennis Taylor